THE CANINES OF HORACE'S *EPODES*

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A wide variety of animal imagery occurs in the *Epodes* (i.e. canines, reptiles and amphibians, birds, farm animals, marine animals, wild animals and mythical animals); however for the purposes of this article I will focus on the most common imagery, namely canine imagery. The article attempts to identify different functions associated with canine imagery which in turn clarifies Horace's intended purpose with the *Epodes* — a notoriously difficult proposition.

Introduction

The *Epodes* were for many years the least regarded of Horace's works.[1] However the situation has changed in the last two decades. Three commentaries on the *Epodes* have been published since 1992, namely Mankin (1995), Cavarzere et al (2001) and Watson (2003). These studies have concentrated on the literary background, language, style and structure.

Other recent studies have tried to discover Horace's internal logic or intended purpose. These studies tend to focus on language, metre and form.[2] The problem with such analyses is that form is favoured over content and this leads to overly complicated structures. The reasons for this complication lie with the great diversity of metre, language and theme as found in the *Epodes*. These obstacles could be overcome by analysing the recurring imagery and focusing on the content rather than structure. No comprehensive study of the animal imagery in the *Epodes* has been done. The purpose of this article is to arrange the images of canines (i.e. wolves, dogs and Canidia) into groups of functions which in turn should contribute to the reader's understanding of the intended purpose of the collection.[3]

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1 Watson 2002:93.

2 See Carrubba 1969:13-15 for a detailed description of the various approaches to arrangement and structure. Watson 2003:20-22 is also useful as is Porter 1995:109.

3 I have included Canidia in canine imagery since Oliensis has argued quite convincingly that her name originates from the Latin word for dog, *canis* (Oliensis 2009:164). Oliensis' argument is based on the descriptions of Canidia's character as described in *Satires* 1.8, and 2.8. She also points out that in classical literature images of dogs form part of the 'misogynistic depiction of female powers and desire' (Oliensis 2009:164). The latter comes across in *Epodes* 5 & 17. If one accepts this premise, as I do, then Canidia becomes the embodiment of the effect of canine imagery.

The aim is not only to explain the meaning of the canine images in their respective epodes but also to illustrate the possible purpose of the images.[4] My methodology for achieving this aim is to arrange all the canine images into groups of functions.[5] These groups include 1) invective, 2) irony and humour, 3) *exempla*, 4) metaphor and 5) setting the scene.[6] The outcome of this arrangement is not only a better understanding of the individual epodes and images, but also a clearer picture of Horace's internal logic and therefore a better understanding of the intended purpose of the *Epodes* collection.

Canine imagery in the Epodes: *Their arrangement*

1. Invective

Horace employs canine imagery in the *Epodes* firstly as invective. The purpose of invective imagery is to divest of or ridicule an individual for offending the poet or breaking social norms. The first instance of such use is found in *Epode* 6. In this epode Horace takes on a cowardly cur which harasses undeserving passers-by but shrinks from provoking wolves. Horace challenges the cowardly dog and warns that unlike the passers-by he will retaliate with a bite. Horace begins by visualising himself as a noble sheep-dog, contrasting himself with the cowardly cur, lines 5-10. Horace labels his adversary a *canis ignavus* (cowardly cur).[7] This label is clearly meant to be derogatory and is used in an invective context. In the opening lines Horace asks:

> *Quid immerentis hospites vexas canis / ignavus adversum lupos?*
> *(Ep.* 6.1-2*)*[8]
>
> Why do you harass innocent guests, when in the presences of wolves you are a cowardly cur?[9]

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[4] The focus of this article is canine imagery, but reptiles, amphibians, birds, farm animals, marine animals, wild animals and mythical animals all appear in the *Epodes*.

[5] I am indebted to Andrewes for his arrangement of the *Odes* and *Epodes* as set out in his article (1950:107-108).

[6] These five groups of functions are derived from Andrewes' 'point of view' approach, though he does not apply these five groups in his arrangement scheme (Andrewes, 1950:107-108).

[7] The cowardly cur has been interpreted as an iambist or slanderer, but attempts at identifying him as a real person are 'misguided' according to Fraenkel 1957:57. He suggests that the villain here is rather a stock figure, like Alfius or Mevius. The image of the dog was usually associated with abuse, greed and shamelessness (Mankin 1995:138).

[8] The Latin text of the *Epodes* comes from Rudd 2004.

[9] All translations of the *Epodes* are my own.

Horace makes it clear that his opponent is spineless. Instead of driving the wolf away he flees. This dog is cowardly (*ignavus*) and fails to perform his duties.[10] The duty of a sheep-dog was regarded as particularly important during winter when food was in short supply, and when wild animals such as wolves preyed on flocks.[11] Both the image of the cur and that of the wolf serve the same purpose here. Both ridicule and mock Horace's opponent for being spineless by calling into question his usefulness as a guard dog.

In lines 9-10 attention is shifted back to the *canis ignavus*:

> *… tu cum timenda voce complesti nemus, / proiectum odoraris cibum* (*Ep*. 6.9-10).
>
> … while you have filled the forest with your fearful voice and have sniffed at food tossed down before you.

The dog's terrifying bark soon abates when he sniffs at the scraps thrown at him. This time it is his greed that is ridiculed. He is distracted by food tossed at him, most likely by stock thieves.[12] In this instance the image of the cowardly cur is again used in a derogatory and invective context.

The next instance of invective canine imagery is found in *Epode* 12. In this epode Horace replies to the overbearing demands of a *vetula* (an old woman) who complains about his lack of enthusiasm in bed. Horace exploits his well established image of a hunting-dog.[13] In this case he uses canine imagery as a mark of ridicule, criticising the *vetula* for her horrid smell:[14]

> *… namque sagacius unus odoror… / … quam canis* (*Ep*. 12.4-6).
>
> ... For certain I myself can smell more keenly … than a tracker dog

Horace compares his keen sense of smell to that of a tracker dog. But in this context it does not serve him well.[15] He is not pursuing an opponent but is rather put off by the putrid smell of the *vetula*. Here the canine reference ridicules the

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10 Watson 2003:257.
11 Watson 1983:157.
12 This image bears close resemblance to a similar situation in the *Aeneid* where the Sybil tossed a sop to temper Cerberus (*Aeneid* 6.420-424).
13 See *Ep.* 2.31-32 below.
14 *polypus an gravis hirsutis cubet hircus in alis* (*Ep.*12.4-6), whether a sea polyp or shaggy goat is hiding in your armpit.
15 See *Ep*. 6.5-8 where Horace compares himself with a Spartan sheep-dog (discussed below).

vetula instead of emphasising Horace's superior skill of sniffing out his opponent. The canine image also deprives the *vetula* of any sexual attractiveness.

Now the *vetula* gets a turn to ridicule Horace:

> *o ego non felix, quam tu fugis ut pavet acris / agna lupos capreaeque leones!*
>
> (*Ep*. 12.25-26).
>
> oh, I am miserable in love. How you run away from me like a lamb afraid of fierce wolves or a roe deer of lions!

The male suitor was customary associated with a predatory animal i.e. a wolf or a lion. The female object of his desire was usually depicted as a defenceless animal i.e. a lamb or a deer. In this situation Horace reverses roles — the *vetula* becomes the aggressor and Horace the unwilling quarry. The fact that the *vetula* is associated with the predatory wolf does not ridicule Horace so much as it does her.[16] The aim of this reversal of roles is to emphasise the animalistic lust of the *vetula*.[17] Reference to the wolf therefore functions as invective. In these two cases of invective Horace exploits canine imagery effectively. In both examples he ridicules those individuals who have offended him: firstly, the cowardly cur who can only prey on the weak when the wolves are absent, and secondly, the decrepit *vetula* who makes sexual advances towards him. The canine imagery exposes not only the cur as a wretch and coward, but also the decrepit *vetula* as a sexual predator.

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[16] An example of the dog-metaphor being associated with unbridled female sexuality can be found in *Odyssey* 8.319 where Hephaestus uses the epithet *kunopis* (dog-faced) to describe his unfaithful wife Aphrodite. Hephaestus says that he would hold Aphrodite and Ares in his net until Zeus returns the bride-gifts: 'But my cunning meshes are going to keep them just where they are, till her father hands me back every one of the gifts I made him to win this dog-faced girl, who is his daughter and a lovely creature but is the slave of her passions' (Rieu 1946:130).

[17] The combination of the imagery of the wolf and the lamb has a long-established tradition in connection with sexual predation especially in the works of Callimachus *fr*. 202 (Luck 1959:35). Luck shows that it is the 'lamb that attracts the wolves'; the image of the lamb gratifies their sexual desire (Luck 1959:35). In Callimachus' case the image of a lamb represents a dainty boy (*puer delicatus*) — as soon as the lamb has matured the wolf loses interest (Luck 1959:36). It is the lamb's frailty, youth and beauty that attracts the wolf. In the same way the *vetula* objectifies Horace (turning him into a 'lamb', her prey) and in this way inverts the normal order of sexual approach.

2. Irony and humour

Horace employs canine imagery to express irony and humour. Horace uses imagery which at face value represents familiar expectations. These expectations are then deconstructed and the images given a new meaning.

A perfect example of this 'break down of expectations' is found in *Epode* 2, considered by many to be the most popular of all the *Epodes*.[18] The epode is filled with imagery of the ideal *vita rustica* and contains various references to agriculture and husbandry. Here Horace uses various animals to authenticate the farmer's seasonal labours. Horace's opponent is Alfius, a well known usurer who flirts with the idea of leaving behind his life in the city and enjoy the comfort of the *vita rustica*. The canine images in *Epode* 2 are slightly more complex, since there is an overlap in their functions. References to the hunting-dog and the wolf at first appear to be setting the scene, but the revelation of Alfius at the end of the poem drastically changes their original purpose. Alfius fantasises about hunting boars with his dogs:[19]

> *hinc multa cane apros in obstantis plagas* (*Ep*. 2.31-32).
>
> … he drives fierce boars with many a dog into nets set before their path.

The image of hunting-dogs serves to set the scene for an actual hunting expedition. The canine imagery enhances Alfius' credibility. Alfius seems truly knowledgeable about the skills and techniques of hunting. The image of the hunting-dog therefore makes Alfius appear sincere and aquainted with the life of a farmer. However, at the end of the epode it is revealed that it was all a hoax. Alfius is not a real farmer but only flirted with the idea of leaving his city life behind:[20] This final revelation (*Ep*. 2.67-70) nullifies the original setting of the scene and the function of the image of the hunting-dog. The image now suggests the presence of irony and humour.

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[18] Watson 2003:75.

[19] Columella wrote in his *De re rustica* 7.12.8-10 about the usefulness of dogs, saying: 'What servant is more attached to his master than is a dog? What guardian more incorruptible? What more wakeful night-watchman can be found?' (Forster 1968:307). Also see Green 1996:228 and Innes 1952:83.

[20] *haec ubi locutus faenerator Alfius, / iam iam futurus rusticus, / omnem redegit Idibus pecuniam, / quaerit Kalendis ponere* (*Ep*.2.67-70), [A]fter making these remarks, the usurer Alfius, on the verge of becoming a farmer called in all his money on the Ides, wanting to lend it out on the *Kalends*.

The next canine image drawn is that of a wolf in line 60:

… *haedus ereptus lupo* (2.60).

… a kid snatched away from a wolf.

The image here is proverbial. These words are spoken by Alfius, again with the purpose of making himself appear knowledgeable about the *vita rustica*. It seems as though Alfius is aquainted with the difficulties that a farmer has to deal with, such as losing livestock to predators.[21] The wolf and lamb reference serves to picture Alfius more convincingly, and is therefore setting the scene. But the final revelation made by Alfius in lines 67-70 changes the function of the image of the wolf from that of setting the scene and renders it ironic and humourous.

Horace returns to canine imagery in *Epode* 4 — this time to attack an upstart ex-slave, but as the reader progresses through the poem, the opening metaphor is transformed and becomes ironic and humourous.

Horace's opponent in this epode is an ex-slave who flaunts his new-found wealth before the eyes of citizens. Some of his offenses include walking down the Via Sacra in flowing robes, sitting in seats reserved for knights (*equites*) in the theatre, and serving as a military tribune in the forces of Octavian against Sextus Pompey. Horace is one such citizen who despises the display of the upstart. Horace now turns to the animal kingdom in search of a similar case of enmity. He finds the perfect example in the proverbial hostility between lamb and wolf. The image of the wolf plays a central role in *Epode* 4. However, here this image is more complex. Initially Horace compares his feelings towards the upstart ex-slave with the proverbial hostility between lamb and wolf.[22] This clear demarcation between Horace and the ex-slave, however, becomes less clear as the poem progresses. The metaphor of the animosity between wolf and lamb loses its original vigour and becomes ironic and humourous.

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[21] The implication here is that the wolf, unlike the farmer, is not concerned with the 'monetary value' of the kid. A proverb taken from Plutarch, 'animals eaten by wolves have sweeter meat' (Plut. *Symposiacs* 2.9) highlights the attitude of the wolf in comparison to that of the farmer (Mankin 1995:84). The custom was that farm animals were too valuable to be slaughtered for food (Watson 2002:120).

[22] Comparing an adversary to a wolf was already an established theme in Greek *iambus*; Archilochus' character Lycambes is one such example where the character's name is actually derived from the Greek word wolf i.e. *lukambes=lukos* (Mankin 1995:100). Lycambes and his daughters were the primary targets of Archilochean *iambi* (invective poems) (Nagy 1976:191). The similarity between Lycambes (*lukos*) and the un-named upstart (*Lupus*, 4.1-2) is uncanny, and it is very likely that Horace is imitating Archilochus here.

Here is the opening metaphor:

Lupis et agnis quanta sortito obtigit, / tecum mihi Discordia est …
(4.1-2)

Great enmity has been assigned by Nature to wolves and lambs, just as the enmity that exists between you and me …

The proverbial enmity between wolf and lamb depicted here serves to differentiate Horace from the upstart ex-slave. With this image Horace exposes the vast differences between himself and the upstart. But as we read on we also discover disquieting similarities between the two. Like the ex-slave Horace has his Sabine farm, as mentioned in *Epode* 1.[23] Like the ex-slave Horace sits in the first fourteen rows of the theatre with Maecenas.[24] The ex-slave is also a military tribune as was Horace when he served in Brutus' army during the civil war.[25]

These similarities bring the opening metaphor into question, since the two adversaries do not seem so different anymore.[26] By the end of the poem, we have come to realise that the image of the wolf and the lamb is not so straightforward. Horace illustrates that he and his adversary are actually quite alike. The image of the wolf is now loaded with irony and humour.

Horace continues to employ canine imagery in *Epode* 15. In this epode Horace uses the proverbial image of the wolf and the flock as metaphor for the oath Neaera swore.[27] Neaera who once promised eternal fidelity to Horace has now abandoned him for another lover. Horace warns her of his vengeance and promises that, as for her new lover, Neaera will also tire of him and in the same way abandon him as she did Horace.

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[24] Hills 2005:32

[25] *quem rodunt omnes libertino patre natum,nunc ... quod mihi pareret legio Romana tribune* (*Satires* 1.6.46-48), '[O]nly a freedman's son, run down by everyone as only a freedman's son … because as a military tribune I commanded a Roman legion' (Rudd 1979:68).

[26] The question then arises as to why Horace chose to attack a character that resembled him so closely. It could be that Horace intentionally chose to fool the reader into a straightforward reading; expressing enmity between himself and the ex-slave functions as a way of distancing himself from the actions of the ex-slave who flaunts and revels provocatively in the great amassment of wealth (Hills 2005:32).

[27] Like the other amorous *Epodes* 8 and 12, this epode shares many of the familiar love *topoi* found in early Greek *iambus*: unwelcome sexual advances, animal images and odours acting as symbols of unattractiveness. This is also the case in *Epode* 15 where Neaera's breaking of her oath recalls the similar situation of Lycambes and Neobule found in Archilochus (Mankin 1995:234).

Neaera promises that:

… *dum pecori lupus et nautis infestus Orion* … (*Ep*. 15.7).

… as long as the wolf was hostile to the flock and Orion to sailors …

The implication is that Neaera would not break her oath as long as enmity existed between prey and predator — no one could ever suggest that the wolf should live in peace with sheep. Apparently Neaera took her oath seriously. However, upon further inspection Neaera's stalwart oath does not seem to be so sincere in the long run.[28] This perception is further strengthened when Horace's image of the wolf is compared with the constellation of Orion that usually heralds a period of winter storms.[29] The metaphor which at first seemed so straightforward and solid now appears to indicate the subtle use of irony and humour.

The three examples of canine imagery found in *Epodes* 2, 4 and 15 are prime depictions of how Horace takes a simple metaphor, such as the proverbial hostility between the wolf and the lamb in *Epode* 2 and turns it on its head. The effect of this topsy-turvydom is that it creates a more complex read. At first glance the reader is expected to understand the canine imagery in its simplicity but upon further reading Horace surprises the reader by giving the metaphor an entirely new ironic meaning.

3. *Exempla*

Horace also uses canine imagery in the *Epodes* as *exempla*. These *exempla* serve to express feelings and qualities which others should admire and follow. The purpose of the *exempla* is to persuade the intended audience to reconsider their actions and rethink their behaviour. A perfect illustration of this protreptic imagery is found in *Epode* 7. In this epode Horace introduces the theme of Rome's on-going civil wars. He questions the spilling of blood and argues that not even wild animals prey on each other in this way. Horace comments on the nature of predatory animals, in this case wolves and lions and uses it to set an example for the Romans to follow:

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[28] In the context of *Epode* 15 the wolf also serves as an image of 'incompatibility' and of 'predatory lust' (Mankin 1995:238). An example of this type of predatory love can be found in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Socrates is speaking to Phaedrus about the dangers of loving too much and says: 'Just as the wolf loves the lamb, so the lover adores his beloved' (Fowler 1917:457).

[29] Horace may here be playing on the fact that as a lover, Orion had bad luck and that the constellation Orion was the herald of winter storms (Mankin 1995:238).

> *neque hic lupis mos nec fuit leonibus / numquam nisi in dispar feris*
> (*Ep*. 7.11-12).
>
> This is not the nature of wolves and lions; never are they fierce except to other species.

His reasoning is that if even wolves and lions do not harm their own kind, should the Romans not also put an end to their civil wars. The thought that wild animals never kill their own kind was a commonplace.[30] Animals were regarded as having morals equal to or often superior to men; this opinion is well attested to in Cynic texts.[31] Horace therefore uses the imagery of animals to great effect to highlight the problems he sees within Rome. The image of the wolf alludes to the legend of Romulus and Remus, and at the end of the epode Horace actually mentions their story.[32] By implication these accursed legendary events may be perceived to be at the root of all Rome's evils, for it have caused Roman to turn against Roman. The imagery of the wolf and the lion symbolise Rome's greatness as a military power — but when this martial prowess became tainted (Remus' curse) it also became the source of Rome's eventual downfall. The imagery of the wolves serves as an *exemplum* that was intended to persuade the Romans to reconsider their own behaviour.

Horace also uses depictions of wild dogs as *exempla* taken from the *Iliad* to persuade Canidia to show mercy. The tone of *Epode* 17 is bleak and pessimistic. It also shares similarities with *Epode* 5. Both poems characterise Canidia as vengeful and unforgiving.[33] However, in *Epode* 17 the poet himself replaces the boy victim of *Epode* 5.[34] Horace is now Canidia's victim. In *Epode* 17 the image of

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30 Pliny records in his *Naturalis Historia* 7.1.5: *denique cetera animantia in suo genere probe degunt ... leonum feritas inter se non dimicat, serpentium morsus non petit serpentes ... at hercule homini plurima ex homine sunt mala*, 'in fine, all other living creatures pass their time worthily among their own species … fierce lions do not fight among themselves, the serpent's bite attacks not serpents … whereas to man, I vow, most of his evils come from his fellow man' (Rackham 1949:510-511).

31 Watson 2003:278.

32 … *ut immerentis fluxit in terram Remi / sacer nepotibus cruor* … (*Ep*. 7.19-20), from the time when the blood of innocent Remus flowed onto the earth, it was a curse for his descendants.

33 In both *Epodes* 5 and 17 Canidia is closely associated with dogs. In *Epode* 5 she appears with a starving bitch, the dogs of the *Subura* and the wolves of the Esquiline (see discussion below *Ep*. 5). In *Epode* 17 Canidia's mercilessness is compared to the ferociousness of wild dogs tearing Hector's corpse apart. This canine association and Oliensis' arguments (see footnote 3) support my view that Canidia should be considered as an extension of the canine imagery featured in the *Epodes*.

34 See *Ep*. 5.99-100 below.

the wild dogs that devour Hector's corpse functions as an *exemplum*. Horace is now the prisoner of Canidia. He tries to convince her to let him go by evoking *exempla* from mythology in which victims were shown mercy.

Canidia, however, refuses to show mercy. The first *exemplum* recounts the women of Troy lamenting the dead Hector:

> … *luxere matres Iliae addictum feris / alitibus atque canibus homicidam Hectorem* … (*Ep*. 17.11-12).
>
> … the Trojan mothers lamented the man-killing Hector, who had been left to the wild dogs and birds of prey …

By alluding to the death of Hector, Horace implies that Canidia has also desecrated him — but unlike Achilles, she has refused to show any clemency.[35] Instead Horace is condemned to be eaten by carrion birds and wild dogs.[36] Horace also appeals to various portrayals of clemency from mythology.[37] However, all prove to be in vain. Canidia's close association with dogs could be interpreted as a foreshadowing of the hopelessness of Horace's attempts at seeking compassion. Just as the wild dogs would not give up Hector's corpse, in the same manner Canidia will not let Horace go free.[38]

Horace's use of canine imagery in *Epodes* 7 and 17 is intended to bring about a positive change in not only the Roman people (*Ep*. 7) but Canidia as well (*Ep*. 17). The perception that predatory animals like wolves do not attack their own kind is a scathing condemnation of the behaviour of the Romans in *Epode* 7. Horace's aim is to persuade the Romans to cease fighting amongst themselves and follow the example of the wolves that only prey on other species. The *exemplum* of the wild dogs tearing Hector's corpse to pieces is intended to arouse feelings of sympathy and mercy in Canidia. Even Achilles showed clemency and returned Hector's corpse to Priam, but Canidia is no Achilles — for like the wild dogs she refuses to give up her victim in this case Horace. Ultimately Horace's *exemplum* fails to persuade the predator to relent — it does however succeed in depicting the helpless position of the victim most effectively.

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35 After Priam went to see Achilles, the latter returned Hector's corpse.

36 The image of wild dogs is significant since Canidia is closely associated with dogs. Horace's fate in this epode is like that of the boy of *Epode* 5. Here the wild dogs and vultures will devour Horace's remains but in *Epode* 5 the boy curses Canidia, hoping that scavengers will devour her remains in the same way that she had desecrated the burials of others for her magical concoctions. See discussion of this epode below.

37 Prometheus and the eagle (*Ep*. 17.67), Circe and the pig-men (*Ep*. 17.15-17) and the desecration of Hector's corpse (*Ep*. 17.11-12).

38 *Ep*. 17.74-75.

4. Metaphor

Horace uses canine imagery in the *Epodes* metaphorically when he compares objects, persons or situations with canine's behaviour. This differs from invective in that invective is meant to strip or ridicule an individual while the use of metaphor is solely intended for comparison.

In *Epode* 5 the metaphors of wolves and vultures embody a dying boy's curse. The epode opens with a scene of a kidnapped boy pleading for his life. Canidia and her accomplices are blamed for the boy's predicament. Apparently they intend to bury him up to his neck, starve him to death and then use his liver in a love potion to attract the attention of Varus, Canidia's onetime lover. All her previous attempts to woe Varus have failed but her new magic will be successful, since the boy's organs will give her magic potency. At the end of *Epode* 5 the boy, whom Canidia has captured to use in her magic spells curses her:

> *… post insepulta membra different lupi / et Esquilinae alites …*
> (*Ep*. 5.99-100)
>
> … then the wolves and vultures of the Esquiline will scatter your unburied limbs …

Here the images of the wolves and the vultures serve as metaphor for the boy's vengeance. As he is unable to escape from Canidia, his only recourse is to call on carrion animals hoping that they will avenge him.[39] The boy's curse serves as poetic justice. Canidia's own corpse is to be scattered by wolves and vultures as punishment for her desecration of the graves of the dead.[40]

Returning to *Epode* 6, Horace takes on the guise of a noble sheep-dog (metaphor) which is regarded as the epitome of what a guard dog should be:

> *nam qualis aut Molossus aut fulvus Lacon, / amica vis pastoribus, / agam per altas aure sublata nives, / quaecumque praecedet fera …*
> (*Ep*. 6.5-8)
>
> like a Molossian or tawny Spartan hound, the steadfast friend of shepherds, I shall drive off and pursue any wild animal through the deep snow with raised ears …

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[39] Wolves were commonly found at graveyards and were known to devour corpses (Mankin 1995:136).

[40] … *Canidia, brevibus implicate viperis / crinis et incomptum caput, / iubet sepulcris caprificos erutas* ... (*Ep*. 5.15-17), … Canidia, with her unkempt head and her hair entangled with tiny snakes, orders wild fig trees that have been uprooted from tombs.

Horace, armed with the qualities of both Molossian and Spartan hounds is visualised to pursue wild animals — unlike his counterpart the cowardly cur which is only brave in the absence of the wolves.[41] Horace, in the guise of a noble sheep-dog is shown to pursue his objectives even in the harshness of winter. He does so with raised ears, in pointed contrast to the *canis … ignavus adversum lupos* (*Ep.* 6.1-2).[42] The canine image is here clearly used as a metaphor for Horace's fortitude versus the spinelessness of the cowardly cur.[43]

The two canine metaphors in *Epodes* 5 and 6 emphasise the helpless boy's dying curse and depict Horace as the perfect sheep-dog. In both instances the metaphors are quite poignant. The image of the wolves scattering Canidia's limbs is a reminder of how Canidia desecrated graves to aquire ingredients for her love potion. The boy's wish is that in like manner her body too will be 'exhumed' and maltreated. In *Epode* 6 Horace contrasts the noble and ignoble qualities of dogs. Horace in the guise of a noble sheep-dog opposes the cowardly cur.

5. Setting the scene

The final purpose of canine imagery in the *Epodes* is to set the scene for individual epodes. Here animal imagery is not being compared to a person or object but is used to set a scene (*mise en scène*) and to to enhance the impact of an epode.

The first instance of canine imagery setting the scene occurs in *Epode* 3. In this epode a prank is played and Horace is the object of the prank. The prank described in this poem is played during a *dapes* (meal) hosted by Maecenas. Horace is suffering from the adverse effects of ingesting too much garlic. Horace implies that the effects thereof are similar to the effects caused by ingesting hemlock and the fierily spells cast by Madea and Canidia. It appears as though Maecenas is to blame for excessively seasoning Horace's food with garlic. Here Horace introduces Canidia quite potently to set the scene for the epode.

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41 The Molossian breed of dog was especially prized as a watchdog and hunter (Mankin 1995:139). Its build was like that of a bulldog and it was also known for its courage (Watson 2003:258). By giving himself a 'pedigree' Horace may be insinuating that his opponent is a 'mongrel' (Mankin 1995:139). The Spartan breed (*Lacon*, *Ep*. 6.5) was known for its light colour (*fulvus*, *Ep*.6.5.) and its speed (Watson 2003:259).

42 Dogs in pursuit typically prick up their ears as attested to by Xenophon in his *Cryopaedia* 3.308-313 the fact that the dog's ears are up also indicates its excitement and functions as transference of Horace's excitement at chasing down his opponent.

43 The spinelessness of the cowardly cur could also function as invective since it ridicules Horace's counterpart for his lack of bravery. In the same way the noble sheep-dog could serve as an *exemplum*, but when these two images are combined their primary function become metaphorically since the image of the cowardly cur is directly contrasted with the Spartan sheep-dog (Horace).

> … *an malas / Canidia tractavit dapes?* (*Ep*. 3.7-8).
>
> Or has Canidia had a part in the noxious dish?

The introduction of Canidia's makes Horace's complaints about being poisoned more convincing and contributes to the comic effect of the scene. It appears as though Maecenas is to blame for excessively seasoning Horace's food with garlic. Horace's suggestion that Canidia may have had a hand in the supposed poisoning is intended to make Maecenas regret the cruel trick he has played on Horace. Canidia's notoriety adds flavour to the symptoms Horace claims he is suffering. Her possible involvement strengthens the validity of Horace's outrageous claim that he is almost dying.[44] Her function here is mainly to set the scene of the epode.

Canine imagery also plays a major role in setting the scene of *Epode* 5. In this epode a starving bitch, the dogs of the *Subura* and Canidia all make an appearance. The epode bolsters the arguments put forward by Oliensis who associates Canidia with dogs. In no other epode is Canidia so dramatically compared with dogs. In this epode the current canine images function to create a truly terrifying setting. The imagery of canines in this poem is also darker in tone than was previously the case.

> Here dogs are the embodiment of black magic:
>
> … *et ossa ab ore rapta ieiunae canis* … (*Ep*. 5.23)
>
> … and bones snatched from the mouth of a starving bitch …

The image of the starving bitch foreshadows the hunger felt by the boy and by transference causes the 'hunger' Canidia has for her onetime lover Varus (Watson 2003:205).[45]

> The next image is that of stray dogs from the *Subura*.
>
> … *senem, quod omnes rideant, adulterum / latrant Suburanae canes*
> …(*Ep*. 5.57-58).
>
> … the dogs of the *Subura* bark at the old lecher, a sight at which all laugh …

This passage has caused some controversy, since a clear reason for the barking of the dogs is lacking. One possible explanation could be that Horace is inspired by

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[44] *quid hoc venem saevit in praecordiis?* (*Ep*. 3.5), what poison is this that rages in my guts?

[45] … *dapis inemori spectaculo* (*Ep*. 5.33-34), dying a slow death amid the sight of food.

Theocritus, who was the first to interpret the sound of dogs barking as an indication that magic rites which are performed to bring lovers together, have been successful.[46] Another possible reason for the barking of the dogs could be that the effects of Canidia's potion on Varus have caused him to hurry from the *Subura* and that he, in his haste disturbed the dogs and thus caused them to bark.[47]

According to tradition the presence of dogs were perceived to be hazardous to nocturnal lovers. Explaining their bark as a response to Varus' hasty departure makes sense.[48] Another possible explanation could be that the dogs are announcing Varus' arrival at Canidia's door, although the wording *senem … adulterum* and *Suburanae* (*Ep.* 5.57-58) suggests that Varus has gone to the *Subura* to pursue other interests besides Canidia. Another possibility is that the dogs could be barking at Varus to chase him away from the *Subura* where he is seeking the company of other women, but this would nullify the effects of Canidia's potion.[49]

The canine imagery of *Epode* 5.23, 58, 15 (bitch, dogs of the *Subura* and Canidia) all serve the same purpose.[50] They are all intended to make the epode more horrific and dreadful by anticipating ominous and truly terrifying events. They are all used here to set the scene. [51]

Horace again employs images of wolves in *Epode* 16 to set the scene. Previously in *Epode* 7 Horace used canine imagery to persuade the Romans to change their ways. In *Epode* 16, however, it seems as though his advice has fallen on deaf ears. Horace now urges the Romans to abandon the city. He uses the imagery of wolves and boars inhabiting Rome's ruins to shock his fellow citizens:

> *… habitandaque fana / apris reliquit et rapacibus lupis …*
>
> (*Ep.* 16.19-20)

> … leaving behind their shrines to be inhabited by wild boars and savage wolves …

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46 Burriss 1935:36.

47 Watson 2003:229.

48 Mankin 1995:127.

49 Bain 1986:127.

50 ... *Canidia, brevibus implicate viperis / crinis et incomptum caput* (*Ep.* 5.15), Canidia, with her unkempt head and her hair entangled with tiny snakes.

51 The significance of this 'negative' portrayal of dogs in *Epode* 5 is made clear by the 'positive' portrayal of dogs in *Epode* 6. Horace compares himself to a noble sheep-dog; this comparison could be seen as Horace's response to Canidia's portrayal of the 'bad' aspects of a dog. Two kinds of dogs, aspects of wicked and good typified by Canidia and Horace are revealed. Horace's 'well-aimed bark' in *Epode* 6 is defined by contrasting it with the 'malicious biting' of Canidia in *Epode* 5 (Oliensis 2009:170).

Boars and wolves proverbially depict the savageness of nature, the fact that they inhabit (*habito)* the shrines seems out of place.[52] The wolves of *Epode* 16.19-20 serve to set the scene; a scene of an abandoned city overrun by wild animals.

In this the final canine image of the *Epode* collection Horace exploits the terrifying persona of Canidia convincingly. Previously in *Epode* 3, Horace introduced Canidia to emphasise his symptoms of garlic poisoning. In *Epode* 17 he uses her in a similar way to emphasise his description of an exhausted poet. In the closing lines of *Epode* 17 Canidia is depicted as a horseman — she is riding Horace, who in turn is depicted as the horse:

> *vectabor umeris tunc ego inimicis eques, / meaeque terra cedet insolentiae* (*Ep*.17.74-75) .
>
> then as a horseman on enemy shoulders I shall be carried and the earth shall give way to my arrogance.

Here Horace has been reduced to a horse (*umeris ... inimicis)* that accepts its rider and its enforced submission. Like Prometheus' torments this submission is eternal. This final display of Canidia's dominance is emphasised with the mention of her *insolentiae* (arrogance), most likely referring to her powers as a sorceress. At the end of the *Epodes* Horace is reduced to a husk. He can no longer go on for Canidia has finished him off.[53] The image of a horse being ridden is overtly sexual and was a common image for the potency of the male partner over the female.[54]

In *Epode* 5 Canidia is busy brewing a love potion to tempt Varus. In *Epode* 17 she exhausts Horace with her magical incantations, and in the end he is left a broken man without hope of pardon. He is forced to accept her supremacy. Canidia's purpose in this epode is that of setting the scene of a tired and spent poet. Horace can no longer continue writing the *Epodes*. This poem is the culmination of all the canine images. In the end Canidia the dog (suggested by her name) is riding Horace the horse.[55]

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[52] In the Latin of republican Rome the verb dwell (*habito*) was normally reserved for humans and gods (Mankin 1995:255). How could animals 'dwell' in a place in the same manner as people or gods do? Horace may here be anticipating the impossibilities (*adunata*, *Ep.*16.25-34) which have to happen before the Romans may safely return to Rome; animals living like people is one such impossibility.

[53] Oliensis 2009:174.

[54] Oliensis 2009:171.

[55] In the final line of *Epode* 17 Canidia questions the efficacy of her power over Horace saying: *plorem artis in te nil agentis exitus*? (*Ep*. 17.81), shall I bewail the event of my art having no effect on you? This revelation of Canidia at the very end of *Epode* 17 seems to nullify the image of her riding Horace, since the mood of the verb, *plorem* indicate uncertainty on her part. However if Canidia is so sure that she has no power

The use of canine imagery to set the scene is used by Horace to give substance and authority to a poem. Canidia's association with poison and dominance is a perfect example thereof. The mere mention of her name in *Epode* 3 immediately makes the reader think twice about Horace's complaints about garlic poisoning. Likewise her presence in *Epode* 17 contributes to the exhaustion Horace experience. He is completely spent at the end of the *Epodes* and Canidia's appearance right at the end drives this fact home.

Conclusion

Horace uses canines in the *Epodes* to portray a variety of emotions, ideas and situations. In *Epode* 5 he uses canines to create a feeling of unease and horror. But he also uses canines, as in *Epode* 6, to epitomise the good qualities of dogs. Horace polarises the 'good' and 'bad' qualities of dogs in the *Epodes*: Canidia, the cowardly cur and the starving bitch characterise the 'bad' qualities of dogs, while the noble sheep-dog epitomises the 'good' qualities of dogs. The effect of this polarisation is that canine imagery offers Horace a means of expressing positive and negative qualities in one image; this adds a deeper and more vivid layer of meaning to the *Epodes*. Canine imagery therefore allows Horace to express feelings and opinions more widely when 'ordinary' language would not suffice.

The canine imagery of the *Epodes* is vital to the collection. They add a further layer of interpretation to the poems. The animal imagery and the awareness of structure implied in the repeated use of canine imagery in different epodes heighten the vividness of the *Epode* collection. The pervasiveness of the animal imagery (only *Epodes* 11 and 14 are free of animal imagery) is not unintentional. The significance of the canine imagery is that it adds a deeper and more striking layer of meaning to the *Epodes*. Through animal imagery Horace provides an opportunity for his audience not only to read and comprehend the poems but see them in the flesh.

By assigning each canine image to a specific group based on its function (invective, irony and humour, exempla, metaphor and setting the scene) the great care and forethought that went into compiling the *Epode* collection becomes clear. As the investigation reflected in this article has indicated, tracing the individual canine themes in the *Epodes* has brought about not only a better understanding of the canine imagery employed by Horace but also of the entire collection of *Epodes*.

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over Horace would she not have rather used the indicative mood which indicates a fact? The final line is open-ended. We cannot know if her power has an effect on Horace or not. Canidia's character throughout *Epode* 17 displays dominance and mercilessness so I think it is safe to say that her questioning the efficacy of her powers at the end of *Epode* 17 does not necessarily invalidate her skill as a sorceress.

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